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GOVERNMENT OF TRIPURA
DIRECTORATE OF FISHERIES

No.F.5(6)-FISH(DEV)/2023-24/23238-39 **Dated, Agartala the 14th July, 2025.**

DEFINITIONS

In this Policy, unless the context otherwise requires:

1. "**Aquaculture**" shall mean the breeding, rearing and harvesting of fish, shellfish, algae and other aquatic organisms in all types of aquatic environments.
2. **"Fishery"** means any activity or occupation connected with conservation, development, propagation, protection, exploitation or disposal of fish and fish products or any place or water area where such activity or occupation is carried on and included a tank fishery.
3. **"Fish Farmer"** includes a person who owns and culture in water body himself/ herself as well as a person who may or may not own water body but culture in water body leased from others.
4. **"Government"** means the State Government of Tripura.
5. **"Pisciculture"** or fish farming is a process of breeding, raising and transportation of fishes for domestic and commercial purposes. However, there are primarily three types of pisciculture. They are monoculture, polyculture and monosex culture.

1. **BACKGROUND-FISHERIES SECTOR IN TRIPURA**

1.1 In Tripura, fisheries and aquaculture contribute 4.21% of Gross State Domestic Product making it one of the most lucrative food producing sectors among the primary sectors. Its significance can be gauged by the per capita fish consumption (27.78 kg approx.), which is the highest among the inland states of India. Fish constitutes one of the primary components of the staple diet of over 41.53 lakh of population of Tripura. While the domestic production (0.83 lakh MT) contributes to nearly 72% of the local consumption, the rest is being met by fish imported from outside the state, mainly from Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal, contributing approximately 0.31 lakh MT resulting in a net outflow of over Rs 600 crore per annum. The Fisheries sector provides an excellent opportunity for both capture as well as culture of fish in the State. Thus, the Government of Tripura aims to enhance the production and productivity of Fisheries sector in order to be a net exporter of fish and thereby save/earn over Rs 600 crore per annum.

1.2 The State has 30322 ha water area under fish culture having average fish productivity of 2839 kg / ha. Number of fish farmers in the state is reported as 1.96 lakh (Private fish farmer) (as per survey report for the year 2022-23). The state is self-sufficient in fish seed production. Amongst agriculture and livestock-based farming sectors, aquaculture provides very lucrative economic returns to the farmers in the State making fisheries and aquaculture a game changing livelihood sector in Tripura.

1.3 The fisheries sector in the State of Tripura encompasses a wide spectrum of physical and biological components that support the livelihoods of lakhs of people. Fisheries resources are set in different ecosystems. With growing population and the increasing demand for fish protein, the need for sustainable development of aquatic resources is now felt much more than ever before. To meet the compelling demands and to ensure a growth trajectory that fulfils the requirements of today and leaves an equally better fishery for tomorrow, it is necessary to develop a sound Fisheries Policy, which is based on the cardinal principles of equity and sustainability, adopting a people-centric approach that mainstreams gender, maintains inter-generational equity and addresses various ecological concerns.

1.4 Tripura Fisheries Policy 2025 would offer a strategized way forward to develop, harness, manage and regulate both capture and culture fisheries in a responsible and sustainable manner. The Policy will ensure a productive integration with other economic sectors, such as forests, animal resource development and eco-tourism, to meet the goals of the 'Blue Economy'. While socio-economic upliftment and economic prosperity of fishers and fish farmers', especially traditional and small-scale fisheries are at the core of the Policy, the Policy mirrors both national aspirations of 'Aatmanirbhar' and the developmental goals set by the State in the 'Sankalpa Patra'.

1.5 The Department of Fisheries, Government of Tripura, thus, proposes a policy for holistic development of Fisheries and Aquaculture sector in the state for fulfilling long term sustainable goals of all the stakeholders.

2. Vision

" Development of Fisheries and aquaculture in a sustainable manner through adoption of scientific fish farming, investment and entrepreneurship development, taking eco-friendly approaches of water and soil conservation to create a continuum for aqua-faunal bio-diversity alongside livelihoods and nutritional security of the people of Tripura".

3. Objectives

- To enhance fish production and productivity of the state through scientific fish farming.
- To conserve water, soil and aqua-faunal bio-diversity
- To promote aquaculture-based entrepreneurship through private investment and public – private partnerships.
- To ensure enhancement of fish stock in natural water bodies and conservation of indigenous fish species through scientific practices.
- To support infrastructure development for fisheries sector and human resource development.
- To make Tripura a fish-surplus state and a net exporter of fish
- To provide livelihood security to the fish farmers and fishermen thereby assisting in poverty alleviation.
- To devolve certain activities of the Fisheries Department for a more focused efforts in order to achieve improved outcomes.
- To regulate fish farming and any practice that may be detrimental to environment or sustainable fish production.

4. Issues and Challenges

Following are the major issues and challenges in fisheries and aquaculture sector in the state:

4.1 Relatively small and Seasonal nature of water bodies

A major part (70%) of the water bodies in the state is seasonal in nature, making them unavailable for fish culture round the year. Small size of water bodies makes it very difficult for the fish farmer to apply modern scientific practices required for optimizing productivity.

4.2 Siltation

Due to abundance of lateritic soil in the earth of Tripura, the ponds/ tanks face rapid erosion during rainfall. As a result, the sandy soil gets deposited at the bottom reducing the water depth and also weakening the pond dykes.

4.3 Inadequate adoption of scientific fish farming practices

Even though scientific fish farming techniques are regularly disseminated by the Department of Fisheries, these are not adequately adopted by the Fish farmers. Overstocking the waterbody with fish seed, lack of water quality management, low manuring and poor feeding practices etc. adversely affect both production and productivity.

4.4 Lack/ non- availability of quality fish feed

Feeding is an integral part of scientific fish farming practice. Although efforts were made to establish several fish feed plants in the past, those plants have failed to perform and meet the requirements of the State. Most of them became non-functional within a short period due to inefficiencies of operations and high input costs owing to non-availability of raw materials.

4.5 Poaching/ use of destructive fishing gears and methods

Poaching is a havoc faced by aquaculture in both Government and private sector in the State especially in Gomati District and South Tripura district. Fishing gear such as gill net and poisoning in natural water bodies cause depletion of the population of indigenous fish species, apart from being a deterrent to development of entrepreneurship in the sector and thus warrant deterrent provisions through enactment of Fisheries Act in the State.

4.6 Frequent natural calamities

Tripura receives rainfall for almost eight months in a year. Pre- monsoon rainfall followed by heavy precipitation and also several cyclone formations in Bay of Bengal frequently cause flood, resulting in pond dyke damages and loss of fishery resources.

4.7 Lack of adequate resources for investment

While a large number of water bodies have been created under the governmental schemes including MGNREGA, the farmers are resource-poor to undertake investments of required scale for scientific fish farming, resulting in low yields. Besides, Tripura is beset with a serious inherent problem of having very high density of population in a hilly State with lowest availability of per capita non-forest land. It is, thus, the need of hour to undertake fisheries activities on certain forest lands (RoFR category) on a regulated scale in the mutual interest of both forests and wildlife as well as the RoFR beneficiaries.

5. Policy Intervention

As mentioned above, although Tripura is one of the pioneers in fish farming among north eastern states, multiple issues are affecting the growth of fisheries and aquaculture sector in the state. Keeping in view the resources, requirements, prevalent practices, emerging technologies and potentials, it is imperative to formulate a comprehensive policy to provide a road map for sustainable and remunerative fisheries and aquaculture in Tripura. The policy has a two-pronged approach of

enhanced investment-based entrepreneurship in fisheries and aquaculture on one hand, and livelihood generation, poverty alleviation and nutritional security on the other. The Policy proposes the constitution of Fisheries Development Board in the State to tap new and innovative opportunities in the fisheries and aquaculture sector through a focused approach.

5.1 Riverine Fisheries

The policy proposes following interventions in riverine sectors:

1. Ranching of fish seed in the rivers to improve fish stock in the rivers.
2. Enact Tripura Fisheries Act to put a ban on use of gill net and regulating mesh size (2-2.5 inch) of other fishing gears.
3. Strictly observing fishing ban during breeding season of fish (June-August).
4. Ban on catching fish carrying eggs and milt proficient male fish from rivers/streams/rivulets/ natural breeding grounds. If such fishes get caught in the fishing gear, these shall be released into water.
5. Discouraging the harvesting of endangered and threatened fish species.

5.2 Reservoir and wetland Fisheries

The policy proposes following interventions in reservoir and wetlands:

1. Ranching of fish seed in the reservoir and wetlands to improve fish stock.
2. Ban on use of gill net and regulating mesh size (2-2.5 inch) of other fishing gears through enactment of Tripura Fisheries Act.
3. Declaring the lotic part (where reservoir receives water from the stream/river) of the reservoir as "No Fishing Zone" as the water current helps in natural breeding of the fishes.
4. Encouragement for entrepreneurship development.
5. Promoting cage and pen culture in reservoir.
6. Prohibition of encroachment of wetland area.
7. Strictly observing fishing ban during the breeding season of fish (June-August).
8. Prohibition on discharging effluents into water bodies used for fisheries.

5.3 Management of water bodies for fish farming in Government lands

The water bodies in Government land can be classified into three categories:

1. Water bodies owned by Department of Fisheries, Government of Tripura
2. Water bodies – both existing as well as potential- on RoFR forest lands
3. Water bodies owned by other departments

5.3.1 Water bodies owned by Department of Fisheries, Govt. of Tripura

The policy proposes following interventions in such water bodies/ fish farms:

1. The large water bodies under Department of Fisheries, Government of Tripura shall be stocked with adequate number and species of fingerlings to support sustainable fish production.
2. These farms shall be used for on farm demonstration activities; to impart hands-on training to trainees such as farmers, departmental field level staff, students from educational institutions etc.
3. These farms shall be used for conducting studies on new initiatives in fisheries and aquaculture sector on a pilot scale before disseminating the same to the farmers.
4. Departmental farms shall also be used for production of quality fish spawn and fish seed which will be supplied to fish farmers at departmental approved rate and

also for fish seed ranching in the natural water bodies such as rivers, streams, lakes, barrage, and reservoirs.

5. Apart from using as demonstration models, these farms may also be used for revenue generation through aqua entertainment park, fish based eco-tourism, issue of angling licenses etc.
6. Certain farms will, however, not be used for commercial or demonstration activities. Rather, those would be utilized for introduction and rejuvenation of targeted species with conservation purpose (even if having low productivity and no commercial value).

5.3.2 Water bodies in forest lands

In order to ensure a pragmatic and optimal utilization of the forest land, the policy proposes the constitution of Land-use Regulation Authority in the State that would, inter-alia, decide on following interventions on forest land as well:

1. Management of water, soil and aqua-fauna to ensure adequate availability of water and fish for wildlife and RoFR Patta-holders;
2. Promoting conservation fisheries through strengthening of JFMCs;
3. Promoting creation of new water bodies through State and Central sector schemes and utilizing for conservation of water, soil, aqua-flora and aqua-fauna;
4. Pioneering organic fisheries as forest lands are unlikely to have influx of chemicals and synthetic products;
5. Leasing of water bodies to JFMCs and other suitable entities as per provision of the relevant Environment and Forest Acts/Rules.

5.3.3 Water bodies owned by other Departments, Government of Tripura

The policy proposes following interventions in such water bodies:

1. Demarcation of all such water bodies suitable for taking up aquaculture.
2. Promote or undertake aquaculture in these water bodies with technical guidance from Department of Fisheries, Government of Tripura.
3. Lease out water bodies to suitable agencies following lease policy as formulated by Department of Fisheries, Government of Tripura.

5.4 Aquaculture development in farmers' ponds/ tanks

The policy proposes following interventions:

1. Promoting adoption and management of scientific fish farming.
2. Promoting commercial fish farming through investment and entrepreneurship development in cluster approach. However, self-help groups/ co-operative societies can also play the role of stakeholders.
3. Enlisting all water bodies by Department of Fisheries.
4. Bringing every water body created through different state and central sector schemes under aquaculture through convergence programmes.
5. Promoting fishery-based entrepreneurship development such as establishment of aqua shops selling feed, lime, medicine, prophylactic chemicals etc. Tripura Apex Fisheries Co-operative Society may play a leading role in this regard.
6. Promoting eco-friendly and sustainable fish farming practices such as integrated fish farming with pig, poultry, paddy etc.
7. Promoting culture of high value fish species like Pabda, Giant Freshwater Prawn, Magur, Singhi etc for better economic return for farmers.

8. Banning gill net and penalizing fish poaching with provision of imposing monetary fine and imprisonment of poachers.
9. Promoting infrastructure development such as hatchery construction in farmer's land for easy availability of fish seed to every farmer.
10. Promotion of fish farming through organic practices.
11. Facilitating regular monitoring of soil and water quality parameters in farmers' pond.
12. Prevention of cultivation of banned fish species.
13. Promoting best management practices to avoid occurrence of fish disease.

5.5 **Aquaculture diversification**

Diversification enables sustainability of practices as well as higher income levels.

1. Introduction of new compatible fish species and prawns in the existing culture systems for better utilization of aquatic niche, disease prevention, adaptation to climate change for enhanced production.
2. Introduction of new innovative technologies like use of probiotics to improve fish health and water quality, reduce water consumption and ensure better survival of fish seed in hatcheries.

5.6 **Fish seed production**

Fish seeds are key to production of fish in any fish farming practice. Stocking of quality fish seed ensures healthy production of fish. The policy proposes to:

1. Promote quality fish seed production in every block not only to achieve block wise self-sufficiency in fingerling production, but enable export and trade.
2. Hatchery accreditation and fish seed certification.
3. Promote export of surplus fish fingerlings to other states and country.

5.7 **Organic fish farming**

Organic farming has been gaining popularity in Agri-allied sectors. The policy proposes to:

1. Promote organic fish farming in suitable areas/water bodies, especially in forest areas
2. Take necessary measures for organic certification.
3. Take necessary precaution so that present fish production and productivity shall not be adversely affected.

5.8 **Ornamental fish farming**

To generate alternative livelihood opportunity for people, steps should be taken for:

1. Developing brood-bank and standardizing captive breeding technology for indigenous fish species of ornamental value.
2. Imparting training to individual farmers, self-help groups, co-operative societies on ornamental fish culture
3. Development of ornamental fishery-based entrepreneurship among self-help groups and co-operative societies.
4. Developing a marketing chain for export of ornamental fish species.
5. Construction of public aquariums to promote ornamental fishery-based tourism.

5.9 **Convergence**

The policy proposes to:

1. Bring all water bodies created under different state and central sector schemes under scientific fish farming through convergence programme as sponsored by state and central sector schemes.
2. Bring all water bodies created/ reclaimed by individual owners under scientific fish farming through convergence programme as sponsored by state and central sector schemes.

5.10 Post-harvest, marketing and value addition

The policy proposes to develop infrastructure to:

1. Promote better utilization of fishery-based wastes through processing for developing by- products beneficial for own/ other sectors.
2. Develop cold chain and related infrastructures for transportation of fish to the consumer points.
3. Impart training and develop value added products for attracting consumers.
4. Promote hygienic fish markets and best management practices.

5.11 Food Safety

Safety of consumer is a priority matter in food production sector. To ensure safe food the policy proposes:

1. Joint approach by Department of Fisheries and Department of Food and Civil supplies to collect samples from different fish markets for detection of bio-hazards and chemical hazards.
2. Developing modern laboratory facilities for detailed analysis of fish samples.
3. Developing standard protocol for traceability of the fish being sold in the market.
4. Raising awareness among the consumers about food safety.

5.12 Extension and consultancy services

Extension plays a key role in disseminating knowledge and appropriate technologies to the farmers and consultancy services provide necessary support to the extension services. Tripura Fisheries Development Board would provide services of extension and consultancy in the State for deriving optimal benefits through:

1. Imparting training to fish farmers, conducting exposure visits in and outside State, on farm and off farm demonstrations, skill development programmes etc.
2. Regular interactions with the fish farmers, addressing issues faced by them and providing suitable solutions to the issues.

5.13 Institutional finance and infrastructure development

Fisheries should be accorded a priority status for financing/grant of loans by banks and financial institutions. In fact, finance will be a major role player in promoting fisheries and aquaculture activity through development of necessary infrastructures in order to:

1. Promote financial aid to stakeholders through state and central sector schemes, loan disbursement through banks;
2. Construct ponds, hatcheries, laboratories, training and knowledge centres, marketing facilities, office buildings etc.

5.14 Welfare of fish farmers and fishermen

The policy proposes to:

1. Bring poor fishermen and fish farmers under insurance policies available at State and Central Government level.

2. Incentivize the fishermen through compensation during the period of fishing ban in the State.
3. Providing relief to fish farmers affected adversely by natural calamities like flood.

5.15 Recreational fisheries

The policy proposes to:

1. Promote recreational fishing such as license-based angling in large water bodies (Government & Private sector).
2. Feeding to fishes in large water bodies from boats and from the dykes (example: Kalyansagar Dighi, Matabari Temple).
3. Introducing suitable ornamental fishes (e.g. Koi Carp) in water bodies.

5.16 Leasing of water bodies

All the Government/ Semi-Government organizations/ PSUs shall follow the guidelines for leasing out of water bodies under respective jurisdiction.

6. Legal status of the Fisheries Policy

1. All the government and autonomous organizations, various non-governmental organizations, voluntary organizations, and persons who are working within the geographical territory of Tripura for the development of fisheries resources, harvesting and preservation, export-import or other businesses, related to the fisheries sector will be covered under the Fisheries Policy.
2. All the water bodies with fisheries resources will be covered under this Policy for conservation, development and management.

7. Range of the Fisheries Policy

In order to provide a strong base for the development process of fisheries resources in an integrated way, proper attempts shall be made on the following aspects:

1. Procurement, preservation and management of fisheries resources of open water bodies.
2. Fish culture and management in closed freshwater bodies.

8. Review and tenure of Policy

This Fisheries Policy will be reviewed after a period of 10 (ten) years to assess its impact and to incorporate any modification or improvement in it for achieving the desired goals, till it is in force.